

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An installation for monitoring containers (3;107; 109; 111) each equipped with an information medium (7), comprising at least one delimited storage zone (103; 300; 302; 304; 306; 308) for storing plural containers and the containers including at least one access (118; 320) for a user to directly access the entire storage zone and all of the plural containers stored therein, ~~provided with~~ at least one device (142) for identifying the user, ~~and with~~ at least one reading device (13; 55) able to read the information on the containers' information medium (7), and data exploitation means exploiting at least the information read ~~registered~~ by the reading device (13).

2. (original) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the exploitation means comprise means (148) for evaluating the stock of containers warehoused in the storage zone.

3. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the exploitation means comprise means for determining the positions of the containers in the storage zone (103; 300).

4. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the storage zone (103;...303) comprises at least one facility (100) for distributing containers (107, 109, 111) comprising a storage space (103) for the containers and means of authorization (140) of removal of at least one container disposed in [[the]] said storage space (103), said means of authorization (140) comprising, on the one hand, disabling means (144), switchable between a position for disabling the containers disposed in the storage space (103) and a distribution position in which at least one container is authorized to be removed, and, on the other hand, means (146) of control of [[the]] said disabling means (144).

5. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information exploitation means furthermore comprise means (162) for memorizing at least one minimum threshold of full containers, means (170) for comparing the stock with the minimum threshold of full containers, means for triggering a replenishment order, controlled by the means (170) for comparing the stock with the minimum threshold, and means (127) for transmitting the replenishment order to a replenishment center (129).

6. (original) The installation as claimed in claim 5, wherein the means (162) for memorizing at least one minimum threshold comprise at least one memory location (164A, 166A) per

type of container for memorizing at least one minimum threshold per type of cylinder.

7. (original) The installation as claimed in claim 6, wherein the memory locations (164A, 164B; 166A, 166B) per type of container comprise, on the one hand, a memory location (164A; 166A) for a safety threshold serving for the triggering of a normal replenishment order, and, on the other hand, a memory location (164B; 166B) for an emergency threshold serving for the triggering of an emergency replenishment order.

8. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the means (148) for evaluating the stock comprise means (150) for memorizing the status of the stock, which are linked to the transmission means (127) for transmitting a status of the stock to the replenishment center (129), this status comprising ~~in particular~~ the number and the type of full containers (107, 109) of the stock.

9. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the stock evaluation means (148) comprise means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container so as to detect whether a user is removing or returning a container.

10. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein each reading device comprises two read heads (130, 131) disposed one behind the other in the direction (132) of passage of the containers (107, 109, 111) through this access

(118), and wherein the means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container comprise, linked to the or to each reading device (13), means (156) ~~for~~ for deducing whether a user is removing or returning a container.

11. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the storage zone (103) comprises separate locations (113) intended each to receive a container (107, 109, 111), a device (13) for reading the information on the containers' information media (29) being disposed in each location (103) and linked to the means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container so as to output to these latter means a signal indicating the presence of a container in the relevant location (103) so as to detect whether a user has removed or returned a container.

12. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 9, wherein the stock evaluation means (148) comprise calculation means (158) connected to the means (150) for memorizing the status of the stock, to the means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container as well as to the device or devices (13) for reading the information on the containers' information media (29), so as to evaluate the stock of empty and full containers, ~~preferably on a removed or returned containers type basis,~~ the number and the type being registered by the reading device or devices (13), and on the basis of the information about a removal or a placement of a container

registered by said means (154) for registering a removal or a placement of a container.

13. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the authorization means (140) comprise means (142) for identifying a user which are connected to the stock evaluation means (148), and wherein the stock evaluation means (148) comprise means (160) for memorizing the codes for identifying removed and/or returned containers, these codes being read by the reading device (13) and associated with the identity of a user output by the identification means (142) with a view to the invoicing of the user.

14. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the distribution facility (100) comprises means of reception and remote checking of the operation of the facility (100), which are intended to receive replenishment center (129) control signals.

15. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1 for containers initially devoid of any information medium, wherein it furthermore comprises a bay (200) for access to the storage zone (103...300), the bay comprising a station (205) for attaching and detaching information media (7) on a container.

16. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 15, wherein the station (205) for attaching and detaching information media (7) comprises an apparatus (215) for

distributing and collecting information media (7), ~~especially~~
~~electronic tags (29)~~.

17. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the exploitation means (17) comprise means (57) for memorizing a list of geographical positions of sites to be replenished containerwise and means (59) for comparing the geographical position output during a container delivery.

18. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information memorized on said information medium (7) comprises a container identification code and wherein the exploitation means (17) comprise a system for locating a container on an industrial site (300) and means (314) for determining the positions of the containers (3) on the site (300).

19. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 18, wherein the locating system comprises at least two zones (302, 304, 306, 308) for storing gas containers (3) situated on the site (300), and each comprising at least one access (310), each access (310) being furnished with at least one reading device (13) associated with said zone (302, 304, 306, 308), and wherein the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers (3) comprise means (316) for memorizing the identification codes of the containers (3), associated with a code for identifying ~~identifying~~ the zone (302, 304, 306, 308) into which each container (3) has been introduced.

20. (original) The installation as claimed in claim 19, wherein the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers furthermore comprise means (317) for memorizing the successive movements of the containers between the various storage or use zones (302, 304, 306, 308).

21. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 19, wherein each access (310) furthermore comprises means (324) for identifying a user, which are linked to the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers, and wherein the means (314) for determining the positions of the containers furthermore comprise means (317) for memorizing the successive movements of containers associated with the identity of the user having performed these movements.

22. (previously presented) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information medium (7) comprises a bar-code tag (9), and wherein the reading device (13) comprises a bar-code reader (15).

23. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information medium (7) comprises an electronic tag (29) comprising means (39) for memorizing and means (33) of emission of said information, and where the reading device (13) comprises means (31) for communicating with the electronic tag (29), ~~in particular over the airwaves,~~ adapted so as to receive said information emitted by the emission means (33).

24. (currently amended) The installation as claimed in claim 23, wherein the functional unit (5) comprises means (51) for registering information relating to said task, and wherein it furthermore comprises at least one device (53) for writing information to the electronic tag (29), ~~in particular a remote writing device,~~ comprising means (31) for communicating with the electronic tag (29), ~~in particular over the airwaves,~~ and wherein the electronic tag (29) furthermore comprises means (35) for receiving said registered information so as to memorize it in its memory means (39).